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ABSTRACT

The differentials between Spanish origin and other ethnic groups of farm wageworkers were investigated by comparative analyses of age, sex, education, migratory status, employment, and earnings. Farmworkers were defined as persons 14 years and over in the civilian noninstitutional population who performed farm wagework at some time during 1973, even if only for one day. Data were obtained in December 1973 from the annual Hired Farm Working Force survey conducted as a supplementary part of the Current Population Survey. Approximately 45,000 households were interviewed during this month. This sample was drawn from 461 areas including 923 counties and independent cities, with coverage in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Among the findings were: (1) only 4.4% of the employed Spanish origin population were engaged in agricultural work as farmers, farm managers, laborers, and foremen; (2) approximately 13% of the total 2.7 million persons in the farm working force were of Spanish origin, 14% were Blacks and others; (3) Spanish origin farmworkers were an older group of workers; and (4) within the Spanish origin farm labor force, a larger proportion was migratory compared with other ethnic groups. (NQ)

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SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPANISH ORIGIN HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE, 1973

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SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPANISH ORIGIN HIRED FARM WORKING FORCE, 1973

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the differentials between Spanish origin and other ethnic groups of farm wageworkers by comparative analyses of age, sex, education, migratory status, employment and earnings. It is premised that the Spanish origin segment of the Nation's hired farm labor force has particular socioeconomic characteristics, problems and needs, distinct from other ethnic segments. In addition, it is suggested that Spanish origin hired farm workers are more dependent upon agriculture as a major source of employment and have fewer viable job alternatives than other groups of farmworkers.

Farmworkers of Spanish origin have escaped national attention historically because of their concentration in the Southwest region and the presumption that their problems were the exclusive concerns of local governments (Grebler, et. al., 1970). This attitude has been reinforced by the lack of data on employment, education, and cultural patterns of this ethnic group (Bulloch, 1970). Also, since Spanish origin people are often classified in the white population, they do not immediately stand out as a separate minority group.

In recent years the Spanish origin population has been targeted as a distinct minority group having problems and needs unique to its cultural background and socioeconomic composition. Increasing political organization among this group (Bulloch, 1970), expanded media coverage of the ethnic movements led by Cesar Chavez and Reyes Tijerinas (Grebler, et. al., 1970; Moore, 1966), and a changing national manpower policy which has come to recognize that diverse groups of people have diverse needs (Briggs, 1973a and 1973b) have all contributed to the recognition of the Spanish origin population. Increasing interest in immigration problems and high fertility rates, and the roles that Spanish origin people play in the problems of farm labor and poverty have made this population an increasing source of concern (Moore, 1966).

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

There has been much contention over the proper terminology to use in identifying the Spanish origin population. In the literature one can find references to Spanish-American, Latin American, Chicano, Mexicano, Mexican American, hispano, la raza, and brown, among others. Related to this problem are the various and conflicting statistical methods used to measure this group. Spanish-speaking, Spanish-origin, Spanish surname, Spanish heritage and Spanish ancestry, each designate and measure a slightly different population.

Recent Congressional hearings (House of Representatives, 1975) referred to this ethnic group as "Americans of Spanish origin"--a method and term acceptable to several Federal agencies responsible for data collection and to the National Congress of Hispanic American Citizens. This group includes 95 national and local organizations representing 3 million Americans of Spanish origin. This method is currently used by the Bureau of the Census in its monthly Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1974b). "Americans of Spanish origin" is used in this paper both as a concept and term.

Americans of Spanish origin include all those who identified themselves as Mexican American, Chicano, Mexican, Mexicano, Puerto Rican living on the mainland, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish from a listing of 19 ethnic groups in answer to the following Current Population Survey question:

> "Which of the national or ethnic groups on this card best describes your ethnic origin or descent?"
>
> German
> Italian
> Irish
> French
> Polish
> Russian
> English
> Scottish
> Welsh
> Mexican American
> Chicano
> Mexican
> Mexicano
> Puerto Rican
> Cuban
> Central or South American
> Other Spanish
> Negro
> Black
>
> OR
>
> Another group not listed

Anglos refer to white Americans other than those of Spanish origin. Black and other groups include Black, Negro, and other groups not listed.

Combination of various Spanish, Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican groups into one category has limitations for research, particularly when dealing with characteristics of the entire Spanish origin population. This ethnic population is differentiated by cultural background, class, occupation, income, education and other socieeconomic factors, just as are other cultural and ethnic groups.

It is possible, however, to concentrate on one occupational segment of the Spanish origin population--hired farm labor--which has characteristics in common with its members. An occupational group represents not only a segment of the labor force, but also a distinct socioeconomic group with somewhat similar economic, social and educational standards (Edwards, 1943: 179). Since income and educational attainment are known to be highly correlated with occupation (Reiss, 1961:83), Spanish origin farmworkers are similarly grouped when considering these factors. In addition, data from this study indicate that of those Spanish origin workers doing 25 to 249 days of farmwork, almost 95 percent were identified as Mexican Americans. This may serve as an additional assimilator of cultural background and characteristics.

Farmworkers are defined as persons 14 years and over in the civilian noninstitutional population who performed farm wagework at some time during 1973, even if only for one day. This work includes the production, harvesting, and delivery of agricultural commodities as well as management of a farm if done for cash wages. Exchange work, work done by family members without pay, custom work or work done exclusively for "pay in kind" are not included.

DATA SOURCE

Data for this study were obtained in December 1973 from the annual Hired Farm Working Force survey conducted for the Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture by the Bureau of the Census as a supplementary part of the Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963). The sample was drawn from 461 areas including 923 counties and independent cities, with coverage in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Approximately 45,000 households were interviewed during this month.

FINDINGS

Number and Region

According to the popular image conveyed by the various media, Spanish origin workers are for the most part employed as agricultural laborers. Related to this is the idea that the hired farm working force is predominately composed of those of Spanish origin. Evidence indicates that neither of these images is true at the national level.

Data from the March 1973 Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1974B) shown in table 1 indicate that only 4.4 percent of the employed Spanish origin population were engaged in agricultural work as farmers, farm managers, laborers, and foremen. However, while the majority was not employed in agriculture, a large proportion was engaged in low paying, low skilled jobs. The major occupations of this ethnic group were operatives, service workers, clericals, and craftsmen. While approximately 30 percent were engaged in white collar jobs, only 12 percent were engaged in higher paying, higher status professional and managerial categories. Moore indicates that Mexican Americans "hold few

Table 1--Major occupational groups of the Spanish Origin population 16 years old and over: March, 1973

Occupational Group	Total
Employed persons 16 years and over (000)	3,363
	Pct.
White Collar	29.8
Professional, technical and kindred	6.9
Managers and administrators	5.4
Sales workers	3.9
Clerical and kindred workers	13.6
Blue Collar	48.9
Craftsmen and kindred	12.6
Operatives, including transportation	28.3
Laborers, excluding farm	8.0
Farmworkers	4.4
Farmers and farm managers	.2
Farm laborers and foremen	4.2
Service workers	16.9
Service workers	15.2
Private household workers	1.7

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports. P-20, No. 250, "Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States: March 1973," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1974.

professional, managerial, and sales jobs because of low educational achievement, lack of business capital, a cultural dissimilarity, and physically apparent membership in a low prestige group which probably eliminates many sales and supervisory jobs " (1966:31).

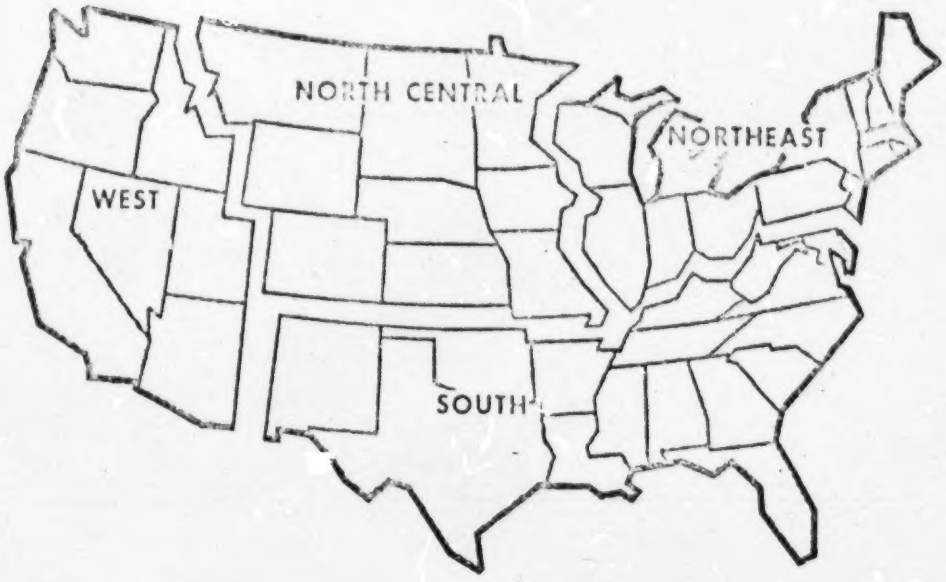
The national hired farm working force is predominately Anglo (73 percent). Approximately 13 percent of the total 2.7 million persons in this force were of Spanish origin, and 14 percent were Blacks and others. Consequently, these data do not support the common belief that most farmworkers are of Spanish origin. Even when the hired farm labor force is examined on a regional basis (see figure 1), there is no evidence that the majority of farmworkers for any region is of Spanish origin. Table 2 shows that Anglos account for the largest proportions of workers in all regions, although the western farm labor force included a larger proportion of Spanish origin farmworkers relative to other areas. Combination of the southern and western regions--an area containing 95 percent of the Spanish origin farmworkers--still reveals a majority (61 percent) of Anglo workers compared with 19 percent Spanish origin and 20 percent Black and others.

Age and Sex

The age and sex distribution of an occupational group often indicates the extent to which members are involved in and dependent upon that particular occupation. Younger workers and women of childbearing age are often employed on a temporary or part-time basis. Older workers, particularly male household heads with family and financial responsibilities, tend to be more economically committed to an occupation as a major means of support. The age and sex structure of Spanish origin, Anglo, and Black and other farmworkers is shown in figure 2.

Figure 1

Delineation of Regions by State



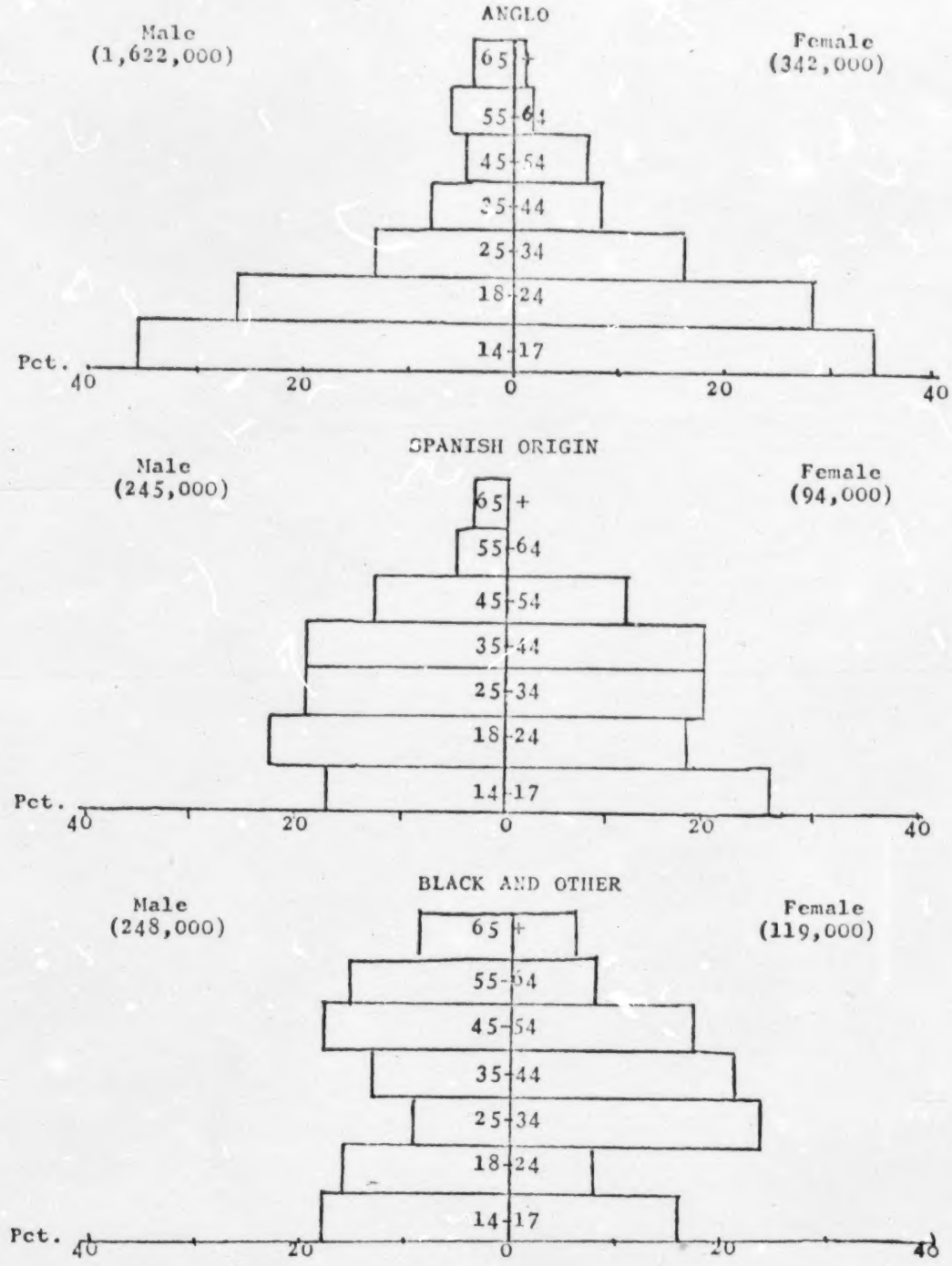
SOURCE U.S. CENSUS OF POPULATION.

Table 2--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers by ethnic group and region, 1973

Ethnic group	Region									
	Northeast		North Central		South		West		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Anglo	192	90	743	97	551	58	478	65	1,964	73
Spanish Origin	7	4	11	1	106	11	215	29	339	13
Black and Others	12	6	12	2	215	29	42	6	367	14
Total	211	100	767	100	339	100	735	100	2,671	100

X^2=701.05, d.f.=6, p<.001

Figure 2
Distribution of farmworkers by ethnic group, sex, and age, 1973



Generally, the minority groups--Spanish origin and Black and others--tended to be an older group (median ages of 30 and 38 years, respectively) compared to Anglos (median age of 22). While the largest proportion of Anglo workers were youngsters aged 14-24 years, the majority of Spanish origin workers were between 25 and 54--the prime working years. About 64 percent of Spanish origin farmworkers were household heads or wives and were most probably major contributors to household support. In contrast, less than half of Anglo farmworkers were heads or wives (table 3).

Figure 2 illustrates that as age intervals increase, the proportions of Anglo workers in those intervals decrease. It would appear that an Anglos become older, they tend to find job alternatives to agriculture. However, this does not appear to be true for Spanish origin farmworkers. This work force has relatively large proportions of workers at the older age levels, indicating that viable alternatives are not as readily accessible to this group and so they are more dependent on agricultural employment than Anglos for their support.

Education

Formal education is generally recognized as a basic determinant of occupational status and income. Educational attainment is a necessary condition for entry into many jobs, and for further occupational advancement. Low levels of education often mean that a worker can obtain only relatively low paying types of employment with limited occupational mobility.

Farmworkers in general have been found to have lower educational levels than most other major occupational groups in the Nation. (Rapton, 1969; Beale and Bowles, 1965) Farmworkers in 1973 had little more than a grade school education with a median of 8.4 years, and thus were considerably disadvantaged when compared with all workers 25 years and over having a median education

Table 3--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers by ethnic group and household status, 1973

Household Status	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Others		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Heads and wives	912	46	219	64	246	67	1,375	51
Other members	1,052	54	122	36	122	33	1,296	49
Total	1,964	100	339	100	367	100	2,671	100

$X^2=82.21$, d.f.=2, $p<.001$

of 12.4 years. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1974a)

Table 4 shows that average educational attainment was even lower for various segments of the hired farm labor force, and particularly for those of Spanish origin. These workers 25 years of age and over attained 4.5 median years of education--only a fraction above the four-year cut off for functional illiteracy. In comparison, Blacks and others were only slightly higher with 5.8 median years and Anglo workers attained a median of 9.7 years. Thus, even among a generally lower educated group of workers, a 4 to 5 year gap exists between the minorities and Anglos. Spanish origin farmworkers attained less than half of the average educational levels of Anglo workers; Blacks and others achieved less than two thirds of Anglo education. The largest difference (7.5 years) occurred between Anglo and Spanish origin workers aged 25-44 years--the prime age working force.

When only younger Spanish origin workers from 14 to 25 years were considered, the data indicate a substantial gain over older worker groups, and show a narrowing of the gap in educational achievement between ethnic groups. Young Spanish origin workers averaged 7 years of education compared with 8.9 years for Anglos and 8 years for Blacks and other workers.

In 1973, only 12 percent of Spanish origin farmworkers had at least some high school education. This compares with 55 percent of the Anglo workers and 25 percent of Blacks and others. Only 2 percent of Spanish origin farmworkers had finished high school compared with over one third of the Anglos and 13 percent of Blacks and others (table 5).

Migratory Status

Labor demand in some areas intensifies during peak periods of agricultural activity and if this demand cannot be met by local workers employed on a temporary basis, labor must be recruited or obtained from other areas. While

Table 4--Median years of school completed for all farm wageworkers, by ethnic group and age, 1973

Age	Ethnic group			
	Anglo	Spanish Origin	Black and Others	Total
All	9.1	5.8	6.8	8.4
14-24 years	8.9	7.0	8.0	8.6
25 years or more	9.7	4.5	5.8	8.0
25-44 years	12.1	4.6	7.4	9.6
45 years or more	7.6	3.9	3.4	6.7

Table 5--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers 25 years and over, by ethnic group and years of school completed, 1973

Years of school completed	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Others		Total	
	Thou.	PPct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
0-4 years	82	11	111	56	110	43	301	25
5-8	264	34	67	33	81	32	413	33
9-11	153	20	19	9	29	12	202	17
12 years or more	265	35	5	2	32	13	301	25
Total	763	100	203	100	252	100	1,218	100

$X^2=264.15$, d.f.=6, $p < .001$

some migratory workers return home immediately after one or two short-term jobs are completed, others continue to work in one or more areas along a migration stream before returning to their homes. Migrant workers include all persons who left their homes temporarily overnight to do farmwork in a different county within the same State or in a different State with the expectation of eventually returning home; or had no usual place of residence, and did farm wagework in two or more counties during the year.

In 1973, there were 203,000 migratory workers in the United States--about 8 percent of the hired agricultural work force. Approximately 63 percent of these were Anglo, 33 percent were of Spanish origin, and 4 percent were Black and others (table 6). While the majority of migrant workers were not of Spanish origin as often presumed, substantial variation existed among regions. In the South over 60 percent of the migratory workers were of Spanish origin. This proportion drops to 35 percent in the West and to less than .5 percent elsewhere.

However, within the Spanish origin farm labor force, a larger proportion was migratory compared with other ethnic groups. About one of every five Spanish origin workers was a migratory worker contrasted to one in fifteen Anglos and one in forty Blacks and others.

The commuter and illegal alien issue may partially explain the disproportionate number of Spanish origin workers who do migratory work, particularly in the South and West. Apparently, many Spanish origin workers enter the migratory streams because they cannot economically compete for jobs with Mexican national commuters and illegal aliens--groups which often seek initial employment in agriculture. (Briggs, 1973a) Regardless of ethnicity, it would appear that the decision to do migratory farmwork is generally based on necessity and lack of viable alternatives, rather than by choice. (Marshall, 1974)

Table 6--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers by ethnic group and migratory status, 1973

Migratory Status	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Others		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Migratory	127	6	68	20	9	2	203	8
Nonmigratory	1,837	94	271	80	358	98	2,468	92
Total	1,964	100	339	100	367	100	2,671	100

$X^2=91.38$, d.f.=2, $p < .001$

Employment Characteristics

Employment characteristics, including level of earnings, time spent at work or work related activities, employment patterns, and the nature of the particular jobs held, directly and indirectly influence the economic well-being of farmworkers and their families. At the same time, these working conditions determine the extent to which a farmworker is economically dependent upon agriculture for a livelihood. Analysis indicates that degree of dependence on farmwork varies among the ethnic groups.

Generally, Spanish origin farmworkers were employed in agriculture for longer periods during the year than other ethnic groups. More than one fourth were full-time agricultural workers employed for 250 days or more, a larger proportion than for either Anglos or Blacks and others. (table 7) Conversely, a smaller proportion (22 percent) of Spanish origin farmworkers were casual workers doing less than 25 days of farmwork compared with other ethnic groups. Almost half of the Anglo force and close to a third of the Black and other workers were casually employed in farmwork. Spanish origin workers averaged 143 days of farmwork compared with 105 days for Blacks and others and 85 days for Anglos.

Table 8 shows that 49 percent of all Spanish origin farmworkers cited farm wagework as their major activity during the year. A similarly large proportion of Blacks and others (40 percent) also listed farm wagework as their principal activity contrasted to only 21 percent among Anglos. Instead, the majority of Anglos cited "not in the labor force" as their predominant activity during the year. An abstraction from this table (table 8A) shows that of the Anglo farmworkers who were not in the labor force most of the year, almost 80 percent cited "attending school" as their chief activity. About 44 percent of the Anglo farmworkers were students, compared with 18 percent for both Spanish origin and Black and other workers.

Table 7--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers by ethnic group and duration of farmwork, 1973

Duration of farmwork	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Others		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Less than 25 days	900	47	76	22	110	30	1,085	41
25-149	657	33	114	34	146	39	918	34
150-249	125	6	61	18	61	17	247	9
250 and over	282	14	89	26	50	14	421	16
Total	1,964	100	339	100	367	100	2,671	100

X^2=150.12, d.f.=6, $p < .001$

Table 8--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers by ethnic group and chief activity, 1973

Chief Activity	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Other		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Farm wagework	407	21	167	49	146	40	720	27
Other farmwork	119	6	13	4	23	6	155	6
Nonfarm work	337	17	35	10	50	14	422	16
Unemployed	22	1	6	2	4	1	32	1
Not in labor force	1,080	55	118	35	145	39	1,342	50
Total	1,964	100	339	100	367	100	2,671	100

X^2=163.09, d.f.=8, $p < .001$

Table 8A--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers not in the labor force most of the year, by ethnic group, 1973

Not in the labor force most of the year	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Others		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Keeping house	135	13	45	38	50	34	230	17
Attending school	857	79	64	54	67	47	988	74
Other	88	8	9	8	28	19	125	9
Total	1,080	100	118	100	145	100	1,342	100

X^2=112.5, d.f.=4, $p < .001$

Table 9 also shows that Spanish origin workers relied heavily on farmwork as their major source of employment, since only one fifth did any nonfarm work during the year. In contrast, almost half of the Anglos and over one third of the Blacks and others did some nonfarm work. When Spanish origin workers did perform nonfarm work, they averaged fewer days than did other ethnic groups.

Earnings are perhaps the most important indicator of economic well-being and commitment to agriculture. Data indicate that annual earnings vary among ethnic groups of farmworkers, thus suggesting a variation in the levels of well-being and degree of agricultural dependence.

Table 10 shows that in 1973, Spanish origin farmworkers averaged $3,002 in total earnings from farm and nonfarm work. Anglo farmworkers earned an average $2,321 and Blacks and others averaged $2,057 a year. (Estimates of total cash wages received do not include the value of perquisites or fring benefits received in connection with farm or nonfarm work.) Spanish origin farmworkers received 82 percent of their earnings from farm work, and almost four-fifths had no other earnings source. Blacks and other farmworkers received about 71 percent of earnings from farmwork compared with only 53 percent for Anglo workers.

Higher earning levels for Spanish origin workers were a result of a greater number of days worked for higher daily wages. While more research is needed to determine the exact reasons for this difference, some possible explanations can be suggested.

Generally, farm wage rates--the more important source of Spanish origin earnings--have been higher in the West than in other regions. (Rowe and Smith, 1975) Since the majority of Spanish origin workers are located in

Table 9--Frequency and percentage distribution of farm wageworkers by ethnic group and amount of farm and nonfarm wagework performed, 1973

Amount of farm and nonfarm work performed	Ethnic group							
	Anglo		Spanish Origin		Black and Others		Total	
	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.	Thou.	Pct.
Farm wagework only	1,064	54	267	79	230	63	1,561	58
Farm and nonfarm wagework	900	46	72	21	137	37	1,110	42
Total	1,964	100	339	100	367	100	2,671	100

$X^2=65.90$, d.f.=2, $p<.001$

Table 10--Average number of days worked and wages earned at farm and nonfarm work, by ethnic group, 1973

Average days worked and wages earned	Ethnic group			
	Anglo	Spanish Origin	Black and Others	Total
Number of workers (000)	1,964	339	367	2,671
Farm and nonfarm				
Days worked	141	170	141	144
Wages earned per year (dol.)	2,321	3,002	2,057	2,369
Wages earned per day (dol.)	16.45	17.65	14.60	16.40
Farm				
Days worked	85	143	105	95
Wages earned per year (dol.)	1,221	2,472	1,469	1,412
Wages earned per day (dol.)	14.35	17.30	14.00	14.85
Nonfarm				
Days worked	56	26	36	49
Wages earned per year (dol.)	1,100	530	588	957
Wages earned per day (dol.)	19.65	20.00	16.45	19.45

Daily wages are rounded to the nearest 5 cents.

the West, regional variations may explain the higher daily wage rates for Spanish origin workers. Blacks and others were predominately located in the South--the area having the lowest wage rates in general. Anglos, while more evenly distributed across the United States were located with only one fourth in the higher paying West, and the remaining proportion in the lower paying regions of the North and South.

Possibly, wage rates may be higher for Spanish origin workers because of increased skills accrued from longer periods of farm employment. Recent research by Rosedale and Mamer has indicated that to the extent worker skill and competency increase with experience, longer work periods increase the worker's potential for earnings (1974:25) Data shown in table 11 are consistent with this idea and show that farm wage rates for all farmworkers increase with the number of days employed in farmwork. Since a greater proportion of Spanish origin workers were employed for longer periods of farmwork compared to other ethnic groups, this may partially explain the higher wage rates for Spanish origin farmworkers.

Fogel, in discussing the relatively high income of Mexican Americans despite low educational levels, suggests that,"...the answers may lie in dimensions which are difficult to measure--motivation, abilities, and labor market discrimination that is less intense than against other minorities " (1965:13). Beckett (1966), in researching California farm labor finds that those of Mexican ancestry have higher productivity levels and suggests motivation and ability as "most likely possible causes" for the Mexican American's relatively higher earnings power in relation to his educational attainment. Considering the overall low educational levels of farmworkers

Table 11--Average number of days worked and wages earned at farm wagework for all farmworkers, by duration, 1973

Duration of farmwork	Number of workers	Days Worked	Wages earned	
			Per year	Per day
	Thou.		Dol.	Dol.
Less than 25 days	1,085	9	111	12.10
25-74	567	46	590	12.70
75-149	351	104	1,373	13.25
150 or more	668	271	4,244	15.65

Daily wages are rounded to nearest 5 cents.

in general and Spanish origin workers in particular, it is doubtful that variation in earning levels was due to educational differences among ethnic groups.

Despite these higher earnings, Spanish origin farmworkers lose their slight economic advantage when household size and family income are considered. In 1973, there were approximately 192,000 Spanish origin farmworker households averaging 5.5 persons per household. In comparison, Anglo households averaged 3.8 members and Blacks and other households averaged 3.6 persons per household.

A high dependency ratio accompanied this relatively large household size. This ratio is the proportion of those who can earn a living to those who are more likely to depend on others for support. While data for dependents 65 years and older—a group likely to rely on others for support--are not available, the ratio of Spanish origin people under 18 years to those 18 years and over is high when compared with other ethnic groups. In 1973, there were 123 dependents under 18 for every 100 Spanish origin members 18 years and over compared with 62 for every 100 Anglos and 61 for every 100 Blacks and others of the same age group.

In 1973, Spanish origin households received a median family income of $5,292 compared to $8,309 for Anglo and $3,472 for Black and other households. When average household size is considered, members of Spanish origin households received 44 cents per capita for every dollar of per capita Anglo income. Blacks and others similarly received only 44 percent of Anglo per capita income.

This gap between the majority and minority groups may be partially explained by the characteristics of the ethnic farmworkers residing in the

household. Anglo farmworkers, for example, were generally young persons other than the head or wife who in large part performed farmwork on a casual basis. Many were in school for most of the year. Consequently, their contribution to the family income was most likely not the major source of income. Minority farmworkers, on the other hand, were older members, usually household heads or wives, who were committed to farmwork as the chief activity. Thus, their earnings were very likely the major source of family income.

While earning levels for Spanish origin workers were generally higher than those of other ethnic groups, large household size, a high dependency ratio and reliance upon agriculture for the major household support, contributed to a low family income and smaller return per person than for other groups. Thus, Spanish origin farmworker households appeared to be more economically disadvantaged than Anglo households and at least as disadvantaged as Black and other farmworker households.

SUMMARY

Various data have been presented on the socioeconomic characteristics of the Spanish origin hired farm labor force. Two central themes have emerged from the analysis of these data. First of all, Spanish origin farmworkers were highly dependent upon agriculture as a major source of employment and earning, and secondly, these workers appeared to have few viable alternatives to farmwork.

Generally, Spanish origin farmworkers were employed in agriculture for longer periods during the year than other groups of farmworkers. They most often cited farm wagework as their year's principal activity, and for the large majority, farmwork was the only type of employment held. When these workers did engage in nonfarm work, it was usually for short periods of time. In addition, Spanish origin farmworkers were an older group of workers, often household heads or wives, who had the primary responsibility for their families' support. Thus, their earnings were probably the major contribution to the family income.

Perhaps, in part, this agricultural dependence was due to the lack of viable alternative to farmwork. Unlike Anglo farmworkers, Spanish origin workers did not leave farmwork as they became older. They continued to rely heavily on agriculture for their major employment while Anglo farmworkers appeared to move into more regular higher paying nonfarm jobs with only occasional supplemental employment in agriculture.

Generally, Spanish origin farmworkers had very low levels of educational achievement. The majority had completed less than 4 years of schooling and only a very small minority had finished high school. Since educational attainment is a necessary condition for entry into many jobs, these low levels of education may have restricted Spanish origin farmworkers' access to higher

paying, higher status employment. At the same time, skills and expertise developed in farmwork are often not transferable to other types of nonfarm employment.

It is possible that Spanish origin farmworkers were blocked from seeking self-employment in small businesses or farms by their inability to accumulate business capital. While earning levels were generally higher than those of other ethnic groups, large household size, high dependency rates, and reliance upon agriculture for the major household support, contributed to a low family income and small return per person. These financial problems were compounded by the relatively large proportion of Spanish origin farmworkers that were migratory. For these workers increased travel costs, job insecurity, limited access to welfare services while traveling, and poor living conditions while in transit contributed to the problems of an already low income.

Improvement of the general economic well-being of Spanish origin farmworkers will depend in large part upon increased access to various types of higher paying nonfarm employment. A partial solution to increasing these nonfarm employment opportunities may lie in the development of manpower programs to provide the educational and skill levels required for other types of employment. However, program development and implementation must consider the particular attributes and characteristics of Spanish origin farmworkers that may compound and complicate their manpower training needs. Their specific age and sex structure, large household size, high dependency ratio, high degree of migrancy, strong agricultural dependence, and severe educational disabilities must be considered in program formulation. In addition, numerous Spanish origin cultural traits, which are outside the scope of this paper,

have been suggested throughout the literature which may have implications for the general welfare improvement of Spanish origin farmworkers. These traits, including machismo, ethnic solidarity, strong family ties, professional aspirations, nonmaterialistic outlook, and language problems require further investigation for their relevance to Spanish origin farmworkers.

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